



Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 2/22

May 2022



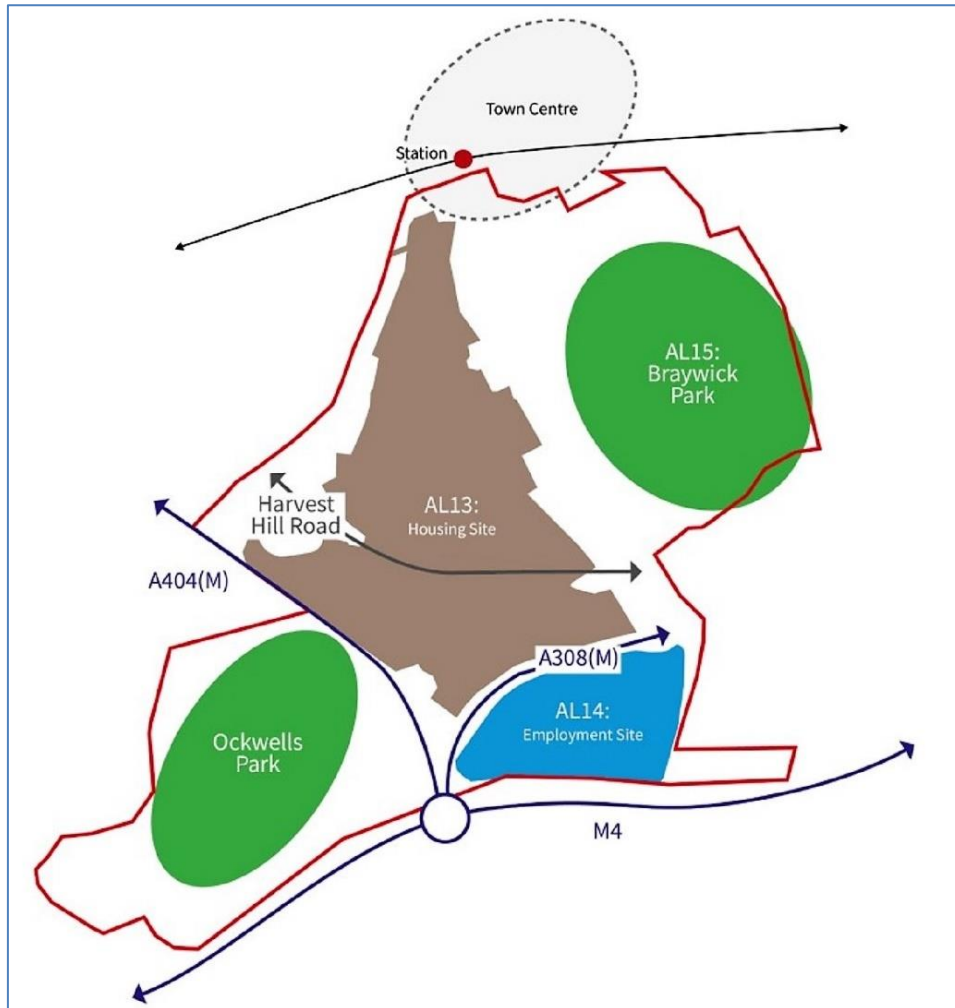
*Our new and updated Millennium Walk leaflet with map is now available
See page 15 for further details*

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The Chairman's Page

The Council has recently been consulting residents about its proposals for South West Maidenhead. This is the area that extends from the railway station in the north down to Ascot Road and the M4, and contentiously includes the golf course.

Under the terms of approval of the Borough Local Plan, the council is required to prepare a supplementary planning document (SPD), in consultation with local stakeholders, to guide development in the area.



Understandably, there has been considerable opposition from the outset at the prospect of losing the golf course. Initially this came from some playing members and local residents who wanted to preserve a facility that was precious to them. But the decision to transfer ownership of the land to the council for housing provoked a storm of protest over the loss of a “green lung”. Subsequently a 4,500-strong petition called for the golf course to become a Maidenhead Great Park. Latterly, the campaigners have mustered sufficient funding to launch a legal challenge to the Council’s plans to build on Green Belt land. If successful, this would take the Borough Local Plan (BLP), which has taken more than a decade to produce, back to square one.

It's a tough call. Maidenhead urgently needs more housing now, in particular family homes, affordable homes and homes for key workers. Although some question the total requirements, to meet anticipated growth the council aims to deliver 14,240 residential units across the borough. Maidenhead, as the more "sustainable" location, is expected to accommodate 70% of those, or almost 10,000; and 5,988 are already allocated on sites in the BLP, including 2,600 in the South West Maidenhead Strategic Area. These are the figures for the BLP period to 2033. But it won't stop there.

Maidenhead will still be attractive as a place to live or for business. And as it expands, as it surely will, the idea of a great park at its heart may be seen as a useful asset. But then where do you accommodate new residents?

Available land for building is scarce. The majority of the borough is Green Belt – 82%; and, following EA reassessments, increasingly large areas of eight parishes and five wards are designated flood zones. The choice is limited. Early in the BLP process the Civic Society advocated expanding existing settlements or exploring new ones; that was deemed unsustainable but it may have to come in due course. Short-term, however, there are only two options: upwards or outwards. And the council is using both.

Along with others we have voiced concern about the huge number of flats in the BLP. The Civic Society is not prepared to consign future generations of families to life in a high-rise. Nor do we believe that Maidenhead is an appropriate setting for very tall buildings; and thankfully the planning inspector agreed, although unfortunately only after some permissions had been granted.

The Society is also a staunch supporter of the Green Belt and its importance to the community. But there are always exceptions to the rule. The redevelopment of Taplow Mill is a recent example. Informed by comprehensive public consultation, sympathetic high quality design has transformed a Green Belt site, previously off-limits to the public, into a residential area alongside new public open spaces which have been widely welcomed by the community. So it can be done.

As things stand, opinions on the proposals for South West Maidenhead remain divided; and with members in both camps, the Civic Society has not formally expressed a preference.

At the recent consultative events, however, we were surprised to hear that half the housing units, i.e. 1,300, would be flats; and why is it thought necessary to incorporate a new senior school in the mix when our existing schools have spare capacity? There will, hopefully, be further consultations on the SPD before planning applications are invited.

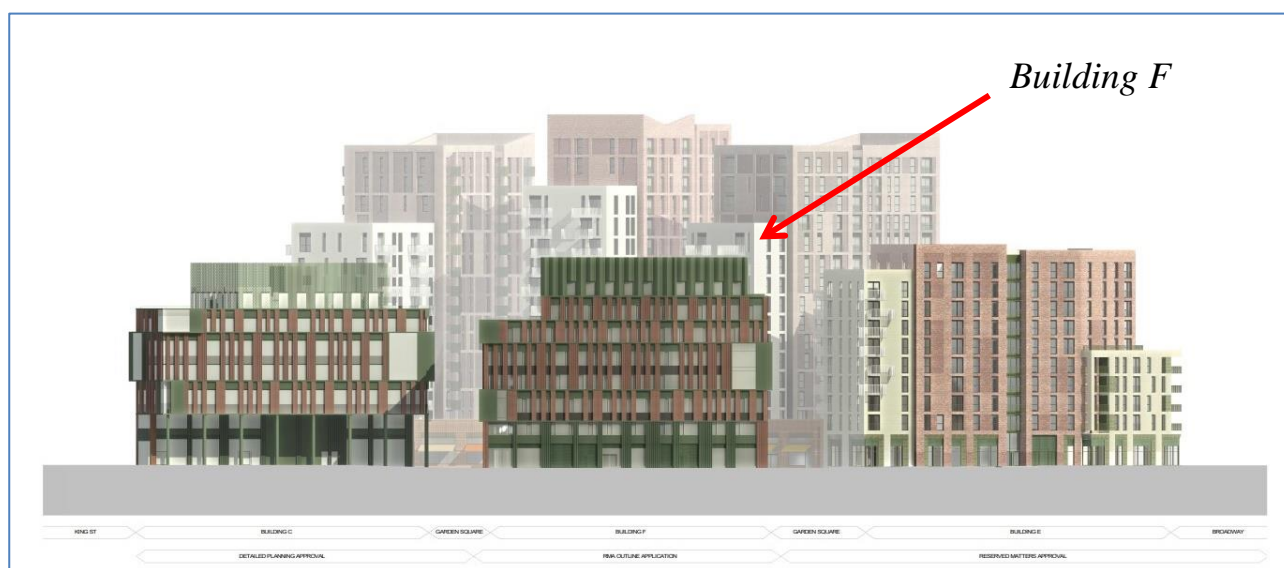
Bob Dulson

Planning Matters

PREPARING FOR LANDING

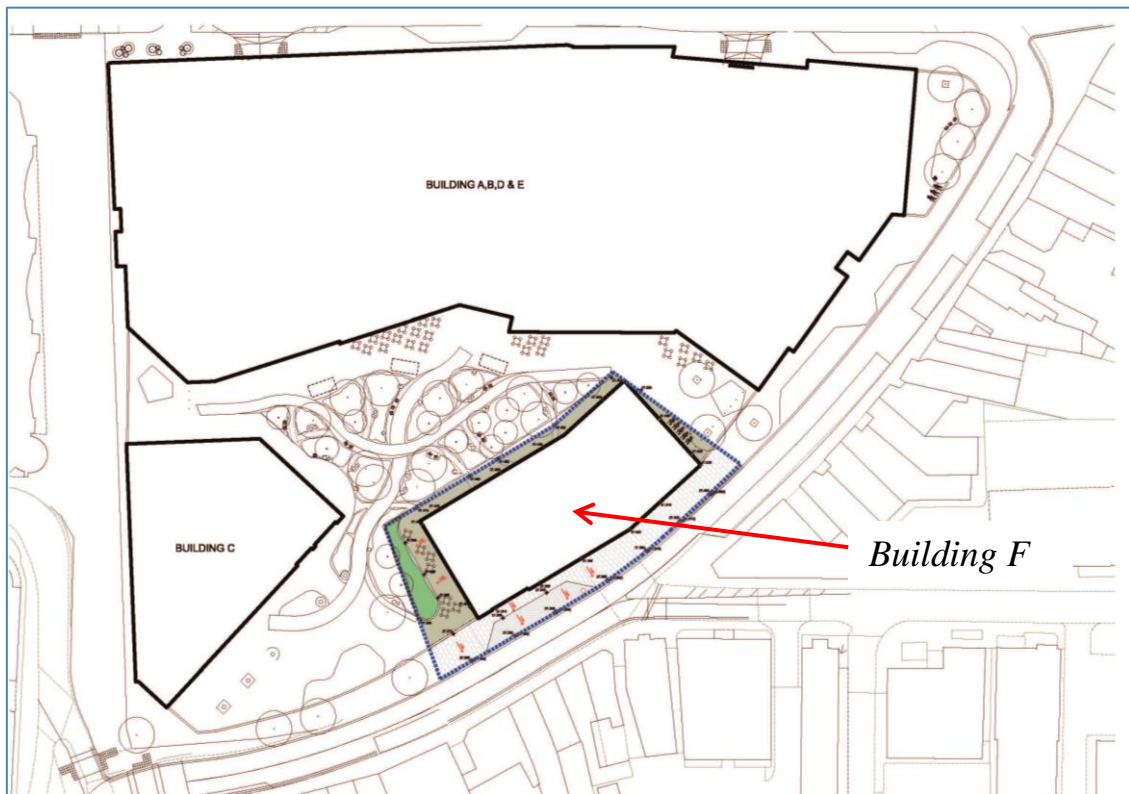
The most significant application in the last three months has been the detailed planning (Reserved Matters) submission for **The Landing** – the long since approved redevelopment of the King Street / Broadway / Queen Street triangle. Since the outline scheme was first approved in 2018 there have been a number of follow up applications, including details of Building E which is located on the corner of Broadway and Queen Street and was approved in 2021 for 87 homes, ground floor retail and associated public realm.

The current application is for Building F, which is an 8-storey office block fronting Queen Street. It is located at the junction of Queen Street and York Road. At street level there are two retail spaces, either side of a lobby which services the offices on the floors above. Building E, which has already been approved, is 10 storeys, but is only marginally higher because roof heights are lower for residential developments. Regretfully, the elevation of the three blocks fronting Queen Street show a remorseless facade which is to become a characteristic of Maidenhead town centre. The illustration in the design package (*below*) merely highlights the even more overbearing backdrop of the higher Landing blocks without the pending Nicholsons Quarter development.



Elevations of the scheme from the south-east (as if standing on the football ground with no other buildings in the way)

To the rear of Building F will be located a public open space known as “The Garden Square”, whilst a roof garden is proposed for the benefit of occupants of the offices in the floors below. The public open space will also provide a pedestrian walk through from Queen Street to King Street. According to the Highways Report the off-street parking provision for Building F is considered “acceptable”. There will be further applications on a block-by-block basis for further office and residential elements of the scheme.



Note the “Garden Square” behind Building F

The Society expressed reservations at the planning stage about the overall height and lack of connectivity northwards to the rest of the town centre in what otherwise is an exciting scheme. As construction is now very evident on The Landing site, and more details emerge as to what the individual buildings will look like, here’s a glimpse of what we can look forward to.



The future view from the corner of the forecourt at the station



Queen St south as it is now (above) and what is planned to fill the space (below)



OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

There has been a concerning development recently where substantial strips of grass verge and similar open amenity spaces in residential settings have been offered for sale at auction. These areas very rarely offer any potential for development. However, in **Ribstone Road**, Cox Green, an area of wooded open green space has been sold and is proposed for the construction of a terrace of three town houses. When Ribstone Road, and the surrounding area, was developed more than 50 years ago this space was left as *open green space* for the enjoyment of residents. Any development will deprive them of access to that area; in fact the land which has been sold includes the footpath which serves four adjacent existing properties. The new dwellings are crammed in with inadequate amenity space and parking, which will result in displaced on street parking in the surrounding area. Obviously the existing properties closest to the proposed development will suffer some loss of privacy. It is

to be hoped that the application is refused, because there are scores of similar open areas in residential developments that could be at risk of similar development threat.

You are probably aware that the proposals for development of **Deerswood Meadow** – land to the south of Ray Mill Road East – has been called in for an enquiry by central government. This site has long been identified as suitable for residential infilling, although there are ecological concerns and flood risk issues. In the summer of 2019 we commented favourably on the first application, which we are aware was not appreciated by some of our members. Our main concern was the poor access to the site. The number of dwellings, parking arrangements and amenity space provision were acceptable. The provision of a good proportion of affordable housing was seen as a positive. We welcomed the decision to not develop the eastern 35% of the site, which is lower lying and will be retained as public open space. The site is adjacent to the large Boulters Meadow development which was constructed on the site of Badnells Tip immediately to the south. In view of the ongoing opposition to the development of Deerswood Meadow that has occurred over the last three years we believe that we should take a neutral position regarding the outcome of future deliberations.

Finally, a brief update on **Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum**. Things have moved on with the adoption of the Borough Local Plan, which has ramifications in many aspects of planning. We still have no Neighbourhood Plan for the area which is covered by the seven wards which correlate with the geographical area of interest of MCS. The MNF team are still struggling to get agreement from RBWM regarding their geographical remit and the criteria used to decide whether the group of people making up the forum is acceptable. The “designation” of the area and of the group of people is essential for the MNF team to move forward with a Neighbourhood Plan. The RBWM maintain that the area and population covered by the seven wards is too large. MNF have conducted surveys and analysis to show that the town centre and surrounding wards are one coherent area – and that any subdivision would be entirely artificial. This evidence has been provided to RBWM and discussed with them in the presence of an independent expert, but feedback is awaited before a further application for designation is submitted.

RIVERSIDE NEEDS IMPROVEMENT – BUT DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH

It's our main tourist attraction and it continues to be a magnet for visitors year round but the riverside in Maidenhead is in need of some serious care and attention; and the council agrees.

We highlighted some of the issues in our review *Making Maidenhead A Better Place* in November. These included:

- Unkempt mid-stream islands with fallen and broken trees
- Poor embarkation points and walkways
- The absence of a public slipway and managed visitor moorings

And we suggested a “Leisure Strategy for Riverside” to enhance and extend facilities for visitors with ideas to encourage investment in river-related businesses, for example.

At a site meeting in March we were able to show councillors how the attractive redevelopments on the Taplow bank had dramatically improved the outlook but at the same time had exacerbated the shortcomings on the Maidenhead side. And they readily acknowledged that improvements were not only desirable but necessary. We should find this encouraging but we’re still waiting after four years for an approved extension to Boulters Lock car park to be built, so it’s perhaps a bit early to celebrate.



The Good.....



.....the Bad and the Ugly.

There is clearly a need for the council, the EA and riparian owners to come together and improve the appearance and make the place more welcoming to walkers and visiting boats.

Martin McNamee & Bob Dulson

MAIDENHEAD WATERWAY ADDS A BOAT LOADING PLATFORM AT CHAPEL ARCHES

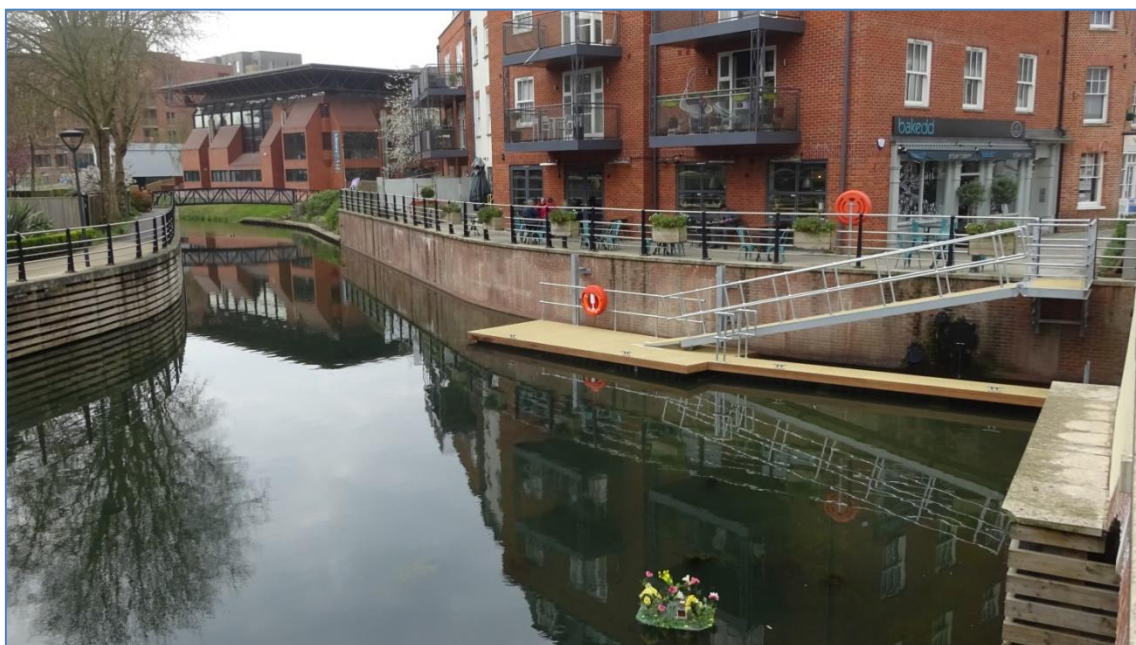
The original vision for the Maidenhead waterway emerged from the Civic Society-led 2006 Great Debate and was adopted as a key part of the 2011 Area Action Plan to rejuvenate the town centre. Six of the Opportunity Areas for redevelopment identified in the Plan adjoin the waterway 'Ring' route.

From the outset the waterway project has had multiple aims:- to deepen and stabilise an unreliable York Stream (neglected and prone to drying up); improve the setting of the Green Way path; create a new public amenity for the active and passive enjoyment of all; and (crucially) to act as a catalyst for the inward investment needed to regenerate Maidenhead town centre. With Summerleaze's early support, the waterways team demonstrated technical feasibility and secured planning consent in 2012. RBWM then took the project over in 2014 and has led implementation since, in stages as funding allows.

The waterways group rebranded as Friends of Maidenhead Waterways (FoMW) to reflect its new role and now supports RBWM by protecting the water supply, maintaining the restored channels and gradually enhancing and extending the new public amenity to encourage its use. The **Green Way and waterway together** form the *only* green and blue corridor running through Maidenhead centre, connecting the open spaces to the north right through town to Braywick in the south. Its importance will only increase as growth accelerates under the new Borough Local Plan.

FoMW liaises with streamside developers to ensure the integrity of the overall design is maintained and Shanly Homes recently completed the Chapel Arches North segment of the waterway to the approved design. Countryside's York Road development is also nearly finished, the new public spaces capitalising on their outlook over the restored waterway. Continuous navigation by canoes and other small craft is now possible, with a few residual limitations, from Town Moor through to the new Green Lane weir with its fish, eel passes and boat rollers. Following removal of an old fixed weir under York Road, the waterway for the first time provides unbroken aquatic connectivity to and through the town centre.

To improve access to the water, a publicly accessible boat loading platform has just been completed at Chapel Arches. Co-funded by RBWM and Shanly Homes, the ramp and platform provide easy access on/off the water for boaters to moor up next to Bakedd. The floating lower platforms are attached to the channel wall via risers that will allow them to rise and fall back in a flood event.



The new public access ramp and boat loading platform next to Bakedd

As part of the project, the western and central arches of the Chapel Aches bridge have been cleared out, made safe and will become a storage base for FoMW, allowing it to moor its service boats on the water – ready and able to assist with maintenance of the restored town centre channels.



The raised dry storage area at the rear of one of the two arches being provided for FoMW use

FoMW is also seeking interest for a potential canoe club and/or boat hire that could operate out of the new base and further encourage activity on the water. The first ever Waterways Fun Day last September was by all accounts very successful, drawing many families into town and demonstrating the potential for the town centre section of the waterway to provide a focal point for activity on and off the water. A bigger and better Fun Day is being planned for September this year.

*Richard Davenport
Trustee and Chairman, FoMW*

Heritage & Environment

What connects Ockwells Manor, Berks; Arundel Castle, Sussex; and Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk?

The answer is the Howards – and not just any Howard. Any Richard III fans among you may remember this warning couplet:

Jockey of Norfolk be not so bold
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold

John Howard was made Duke of Norfolk by Richard III when the latter seized the throne in 1483 and both paid the ultimate price in 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth. However, many years before, i.e. by 1467, Howard married the widow of **John Norreys Esquire** (builder of **Ockwells**) and lived there. It is likely that he was so impressed by the spectacular array of armorial glass at Ockwells that he helped fund something similar in Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, which included figures of himself and his relatives, including Norreys' widow, Alice Chedworth, though only hers and some relatives survive. The Howards evidently had connections with this area.



The armorial glass in Holy trinity Church, Long Melford

Howard's figure is lost but is known from a drawing in a wonderful book created by Henry Lilly, Rouge Dragon, held in the archives at Arundel Castle, seat of the Dukes of Norfolk.



The book on the History of the Howards created by Henry Lilly in 1637 and kept at Arundel Castle archives. It includes drawings of the figures of Howards and their relatives in Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, some of which are now lost



Elizabeth Mowbray, née Talbot, Duchess of Norfolk; and Alice Chedworth, widow of John Norreys Esq, already married to Sir John Howard when the glass was put up. Alice later became Duchess of Norfolk when he was made Duke by Richard III in 1483. Alice has been given the inscription of a lost figure.



Sir Stephen Leech

There is a further intriguing connection between Ockwells and Long Melford, that suggests the answer to the puzzle: why did an English diplomat, posted to Berlin at the time, fund the Victorian restoration of Ockwells Manor in 1889-1892?

My theory: the young diplomat, Stephen Leech (later Sir Stephen Leech KCMG) would have visited Melford Hall, across the road from Holy Trinity Church, as his elder sister Ethel was married to the Rev William Hyde Parker and they lived at the Hall. The Rev Parker's father, Sir William Parker, was greatly involved in the restoration of both church and stained glass and also wrote about its history. It is possible that Sir William motivated Stephen Leech to restore Ockwells, which the diplomat may have known about from his time at Eton.

Interestingly, one of Leech's cousins was the writer Beatrix Potter of Peter Rabbit fame, who was a regular visitor to Melford Hall.

Leech certainly made sure Ockwells was marked with the family armorials, widening the original porch to give them a prominent position despite complaints from William Morris's *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*.



The photo, left, shows the porch as widened during the Leech restoration with the window above also added at that time.

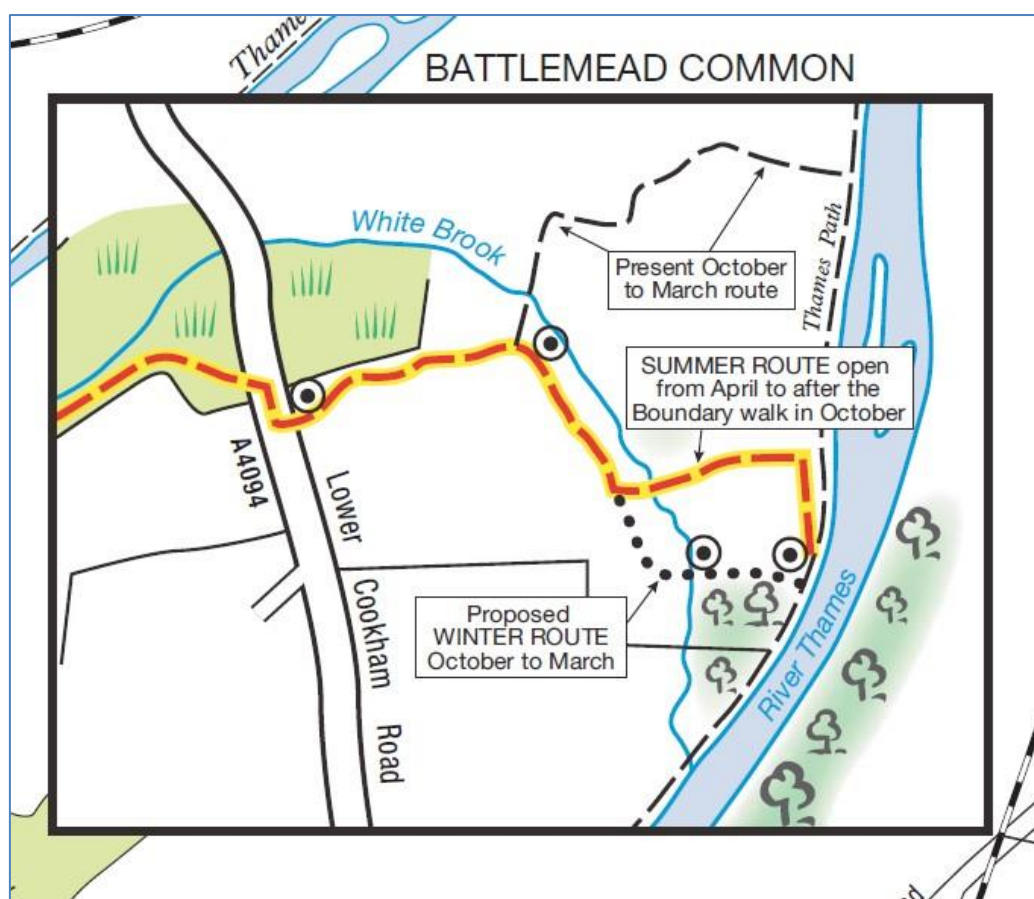
Below: detail of Leech's armorials under the window



To his credit, however, Leech did get the armorial glass, kept at Taplow Court for many years, reinstated in the great hall and also uncovered its wonderful timbers, so we mustn't complain too much!

MILLENNIUM WALK LEAFLET UPDATED

In 2018 farmland, formerly part of White Place Farm, was bought by the Royal Borough to provide public open space and the missing link in the Millennium Walk. To protect overwintering wildfowl the link is only fully open from April to after the Boundary Walk in October. The leaflet, first published in 2012 when the path across Berkshire College of Agriculture was achieved, has therefore been updated, not only showing the new seasonal path but proposing a further path for use in the winter.



Inset map from the updated Millennium Walk leaflet showing the seasonal route

Members participating in the walk on Battlemead on 17th July (see below) will be able to pick up copy. Leaflets are also available on the Maidenhead Arts notice board in Maidenhead Library and the Rio Deli café there, Maidenhead Heritage Centre and also on the community noticeboard in the Nicholsons centre.

We are grateful to Dave Ramm of EBR for masterminding the drafting of the new leaflet and to **Maidenhead Lions** for awarding us one of their Platinum Awards to cover printing costs – their contribution to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Ann Darracott

Forthcoming Events

Sadly, there is still very little to report due to the restrictions with which we have been living and the continued reluctance of folk to meet in person. The Society's executive committee has managed to continue to function by making good use of Zoom and we hope to resume face-to-face meetings as soon as members are comfortable with this.

However, this year we are pleased to say that we will be out and about again with the Civic Society gazebo and doing our favourite thing of talking to existing and potentially new members. The planned events are: Cox Green May Fayre on 14th May; Maidenhead Festival on the weekend of July 23rd and 24th; and the Town Show on 10th September.

We are looking for help to set up these events and if you are able to lend a hand if only for an hour please contact me at joyce@delasalle.me.uk or telephone 07917 876145.

BATTLEMEAD COMMON WALK Sunday 17th July 2022

All are invited to join this walk organised by our Society and East Berks Ramblers (EBR) to celebrate the seasonal opening of the Causeway Path across Battlemead Common. **Meet at Boulter's Lock car park at 1.45pm for a 2pm start.**

The walk will be led by Steve Gillions from EBR and will start from Boulter's Lock Car Park at 2.00 pm. We will follow the Thames Path to reach the gate on Battlemead passing alongside the Battlemead woodland and boundary stone No. 27.



*The Thames Path next to the woodland
on Battlemead Common*



At the entrance gate and also inside the common are attractive signboards installed by the Royal Borough.

We will then take the Causeway Path (opened on 1st April) across the East Field, to enjoy the view across to Cliveden, hopefully seeing wild fowl other than Canada Geese.



The Causeway Path looking east



Cliveden seen from the Causeway Path in April this year

We will then skirt the West Field, passing Boundary Stone No. 25, to take the northern perimeter path towards White Place Farm, once owned by the Astors, and so re-join the Thames Path. Turning right here will return us to Boulter's Lock and perhaps a cup of tea! The distance is about 2½ miles, on flat ground.

The Ramblers will be leading a longer walk on from Battlemead, taking the Thames Path to Cookham, returning to Boulter's Lock, via the Green Way, by way of Strand Water and Widbrook Common and we are welcome to join them. This walk will be about 6 miles in total, again on level ground and footpaths, so you need to be fit enough to walk this at a reasonable pace.

If you are interested in doing the walk on 17th July, please contact Joyce Delasalle on joyce@delasalle.me.uk leaving a name, number of people walking and phone number (ideally a mobile). If you decide later on not to do the walk let Joyce know.

Other events

Our friends at the Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS) extend an invitation to Society members to join in with their programme of online talks. The full list of their talks through to October is on their ***Ticketsource*** page at www.ticketsource.co.uk/maidenhead-archaeological-and-historical-society. Non-members of MAHS are all welcome, but there is a £3 charge. Booking is through ***Ticketsource***.

Subscription Reminder

We would like to remind our members who pay by cheque that your subscriptions are due on June 1st. If you would like to change the way you pay to a Standing Order the details are: Lloyds Bank, Sort Code 30-95-36, account number 00277876. Subscriptions have not changed for the coming year but could you please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount as listed below. Your prompt payment would be appreciated as this helps the Society carry out its good work on behalf of the members and to the benefit of Maidenhead.

If you have any queries please contact me on joyce@delasalle.me.uk or telephone 01628 637342.

Single membership	£15.00
Family Membership (2 members at one address)	£20.00

Joyce Delasalle
Membership Secretary

News from the Heritage Centre

Since the last Civic Society News, the Heritage Centre has been very excited to have taken possession of two significant new exhibits, both of which can be viewed by visiting our main gallery.

First, we were donated a 1950 Dynatron radio-gramophone, made at the Hacker-Dynatron factory in Maidenhead. Dynatron was the top-of-the-range brand name for audio devices that Hacker produced and this piece is in excellent condition – we have even used it to play some 78 records, and it has a wonderful tone!

Then, we received a 1921 GWK motor car, built at the factory on the Cornwallis estate, which has been bequeathed to us in the will of a grandson of one of the founders of the company. The car is in roadworthy condition, and we hope to be able to take it on some local outings to various summertime events, such as the Maidenhead Festival. GWK vehicles were quite unique as they were built with an unusual “friction drive” system that did away with the need for a conventional gearbox. The friction drive is clearly visible when you visit the car, and we will be happy to explain it to you, if you are interested!

Of course, we are still looking out for new Volunteers to join our team, and if you (or anyone you know) would like to talk to us about the possibilities, please pop in to see us, or phone our office, or email to “info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk”

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 14th May 2022
Society display

Cox Green Fayre

Saturday 23rd / Sunday 24th July 2022
Society display

Maidenhead Festival

Sunday 17th July 2022
Walk

Battlemead Common Walk

1.45pm for 2.00pm at Boulters Lock car park

MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Patron The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

KEY CONTACTS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2022

All meetings are online via Zoom until further notice

11th January, 8th February, 8th March, 12th April, 10th May, 7th June, 12th July, 9th August, 13th September, 11th October, 8th November, 13th December

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 8.00 pm

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 15th July 2022**

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